

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 THE HA 05736 01 OF 02 120617Z
ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-07
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15
USIA-06 ACDA-12 TRSE-00 ERDA-05 NRC-05 OES-07
EB-08 /096 W

-----096964 120634Z /10

R 111228Z NOV 77
FM AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1549
INFO AMEMBASSY BONN
AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS
AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY ROME
AMEMBASSY OSLO
USMISSION USNATO

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 THE HAGUE 5736

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: MNUC NATO NPG NL
SUBJECT: ENHANCED RADIATION/REDUCED BLAST WEAPON (ER/RB);
DUTCH UNEASE DEEPENS

REF: THE HAGUE 5508

1. SUMMARY: POLITICAL EXPERTS AND THE PUBLIC HAVE THIS PAST WEEK BEEN TREATED TO A HEAVY DOSE OF INFORMATION ABOUT THE ER/RB WEAPON AS A PUBLIC DEMONSTRATION AGAINST THE WEAPON IN UTRECHT AND A PARLIAMENTARY HEARING IN THE HAGUE BOTH RECEIVED WIDE PUBLICITY. IT IS HIGHLY DOUBTFUL THAT THIS HELPED CLARIFY ANY OF THE SPECIFIC ISSUES. MORE LIKELY, THE TOTAL EFFECT HAS BEEN TO REENFORCE POLITICAL AND PUBLIC SUSPICION ABOUT THE WEAPON. END SUMMARY.

2. THE DEMONSTRATION ON NOV 5 IN UTRECHT, WHILE
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 THE HA 05736 01 OF 02 120617Z

ORGANIZED BY ANTI-BOMB ACTIVISTS, HAD BROAD POLITICAL SUPPORT. IT WAS SPONSORED BY FIVE POLITICAL PARTIES (THE SOCIALIST PVDS, D'66, COMMUNISTS, RADICALS AND PACIFISTS) COMMANDING 67 OUT OF 150 PARLIAMENTARY SEATS, AS WELL AS THE INTER-CHURCH PEACE COUNCIL AND PAX CHRISTI. ALTHOUGH THE CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATIC CDA WITHDREW AT THE LAST MOMENT FROM SPONSORSHIP, MANY OF THEIR 49 MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT WERE PROBABLY SYMPATHETIC. THE EVENT

DREW A LARGE CROWD WHICH APPLAUDED A SUCCESSION OF SPEAKERS WHO DENOUNCED THE ER/RB WEAPON WITH ARGUMENTS RANGING FROM THE REASONABLE TO THE ABSURD. PERHAPS THE MOST EXTREME VIEW WAS THAT OF MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT VAN DER SPIK OF THE PACIFIST SOCIALIST SPLINTER PARTY, WHO CONJURED UP A PICTURE OF POTENTIAL USE OF THE WEAPON TO QUELL DOMESTIC SOCIAL UNREST IN WESTERN EUROPE. AVERSION TO THE WEAPON WAS VOICED IN MORE CONVENTIONAL TERMS BY SOCIALIST MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT (AND UNTIL RECENTLY INTERNATIONAL SECRETARY FOR THE SOCIALIST PARTY) HARRY VAN DEN BERGH, WHO TERMED THE WEAPON THE "FRIGHTENING PRODUCT OF A MATERIALISTIC--IF YOU WILL, CAPITALISTIC--PROCESS WHICH KILLS PEOPLE BUT DOES NOT AFFECT PROPERTY." THOUGH THE MEETING PRODUCED A LOT OF HEAT WITH LITTLE LIGHT, IT REMAINED ORDERLY. LIKE THE PARLIAMENTARY HEARING, WHICH TOOK PLACE ON NOV 7, PRESS COVERAGE, THOUGH WIDE, WAS SOMEWHAT OVERSHADOWED BY POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS IN CONNECTION WITH THE GOVERNMENT FORMATION. THE DEMONSTRATION PROVIDED THE OPPORTUNITY FOR THE ANTI-BOMB ACTIVISTS TO GET THEIR FEELINGS OFF THEIR CHESTS AND GAVE SOME FOCUS TO THE EFFORTS OF THOSE WHO OPPOSE INTRODUCTION OF THE ER/RB WEAPON INTO EUROPE.

3. THOUGH THE SETTING WAS ALTOGETHER DIFFERENT, THE PARLIAMENTARY HEARINGS ON THE WEAPON, CONDUCTED IN THE HAGUE UNDER THE AUSPICES OF DEFENSE AND FOREIGN AFFAIRS COMMITTEES OF THE SECOND CHAMBER (THE LOWER HOUSE OF THE DUTCH PARLIAMENT), HAD
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 THE HA 05736 01 OF 02 120617Z

A SIMILAR EFFECT AND STRONGLY REENFORCED EXISTING FEELINGS OF DOUBT ABOUT THE ER/RB WEAPON. FROM EARLY IN THE MORNING TO LATE THAT EVENING A PARADE OF WITNESSES, INCLUDING SOME FOREIGNERS BUT NO AMERICANS, VOICED THEIR VIEWS AND SUBMITTED TO QUESTIONING. NONE OF THE WITNESSES CAME DOWN WHOLEHEARTEDLY IN SUPPORT OF THE WEAPON, THOUGH DEPUTY DIRECTOR OF THE INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTE OF STRATEGIC STUDIES, COL JONATHAN ALFORD, AND UWE NERLICH FROM THE MUNICH INSTITUTE FOR RESEARCH ON INTERNATIONAL POLITICAL AND PEACE QUESTIONS MENTIONED THE ADVANTAGES OF THE WEAPON FROM A MILITARY STANDPOINT. THE TWO GOVERNMENT WITNESSES, MFA NATO DIRECTOR VAN VLOTEN AND CHAIRMAN OF THE DEFENSE STAFF GENERAL WIJTING, CAREFULLY FOLLOWED THE SCRIPT OF THEIR RESPECTIVE MINISTERS (REFTEL). OTHERS, INCLUDING SIPRI DIRECTOR BARNABY, RETIRED PROF ROLING OF THE GRONINGEN INSTITUTE FOR POLEMOLOGY, SAM ROZEMOND OF THE NETHERLANDS INSTITUTE FOR PEACE QUESTIONS AND PROF ALTING VON GEUSAU OF THE JFK INSTITUTE AT TILBURG, EXPRESSED VIEWS RINGING FROM DOUBT TO OUTRIGHT

CONFIDENTIAL

NNN

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 THE HA 05736 02 OF 02 120623Z
ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-07

L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 ACDA-12 TRSE-00 ERDA-05 NRC-05 OES-07

EB-08 /096 W

-----097116 120635Z /10

R 111228Z NOV 77

FM AMEMBSSY THE HAGUE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1550

INFO AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY ROME

AMEMBASSY OSLO

USMISSION USNATO

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 THE HAGUE 5736

CRITICISM, ALL COMING DOWN AGAINST INTRODUCTION OF THE WEAPON.
SO DID A NUMBER OF PRIVATE ORGANIZATIONS, INCLUDING PAX CHRISTI.

4. PERHAPS THE MOST STARTLING COMMENT DURING THE DAY CAME
FROM GEN WIJTING, WHO, IN ANSWER TO QUESTIONS, MENTIONED THE
POSSIBILITY OF PREDELEGATION, UNDER CERTAIN CIRCUMSTANCES, OF
THE DECISION TO USE NUCLEAR WEAPONS. THE COMMENT RAISED
EYEBROWS ALL AROUND THE ROOM AND CAUSED DISMAY ON THE
PART OF WIJTING'S STAFF WHICH THEY DID NOT HESITATE TO SHARE
WITH EMBASSY OFFICERS. WIJTING'S COMMENT ALSO LED THE MFA
TO ISSUE A STATEMENT NOV 9 REAFFIRMING THAT EACH USE OF A
NUCLEAR WEAPON WOULD REQUIRE A NEW POLITICAL AUTHORIZATION
FROM THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES. EXPOERT OPINION WAS
WIDELY DIVIDED AS TO THE POSSIBLE EFFECT OF THE WEAPON ON THE
WESTERN DETERRENCE. OPINION WAS ALSO DIVIDED ON THE WEAPON'S
EFFECT ON THE THRESHOLD, WITH ROLING COMMENTING THAT INTRO-
DUCTION OF THE WEAPON WAS LIKELY TO INCREASE PRESSURE ON THE
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 THE HA 05736 02 OF 02 120623Z

AMRICAN PRESIDENT FOR ITS USE. VIRTUALLY ALL WITNESSES
WHO ADDRESSED THE POINT FELT THAT INTRODUCTION OF THE WEAPON
WOULD HAVE AN ADVERSE EFFECT ON ARMS CONTROL. ROLING CALLED

INTRODUCTION OF THE WEAPON A VIOLATION OF THE NPT.

5. THE ISSUE OF NATO CONVENTIONAL STRENGTH REMAINED ON THE PERIPHERY OF THE DISCUSSION, THOUGH MOST PARTICIPANTS SEEMED TO ACCEPT THE IMPORTANCE OF A STRONG CONVENTIONAL EFFORT, BOTH AS A CONTRIBUTION TO A CREDITABLE WESTERN DEFENSE POSTURE AS WELL AS AN ATTEMPT TO REDUCE THE LIKELIHOOD OF RELIANCE ON NUCLEAR WEAPONS IN WARFIGHTING. THE RESPECTED COLUMNIST AND HEAD OF THE NETHERLANDS INSTITUTE OF INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS HELDRING, WHO WAS NOT PRESENT, WENT INTO PRINT JUST BEFORE THE HEARING WITH THE VIEW THAT, IF THE EUROPEANS VETOED THE ER/RB WEAPON AND FAILED TO STRENGTHEN THEIR CONVENTIONAL POSTURE, IT COULD ONLY LEAD THE US TO CONCLUDE THAT EUROPE WAS NOT INTERESTED IN ITS OWN DEFENSE.

6. THROUGHOUT THE HEARING THERE WERE OCCASIONAL SOUNDS OF DISTRUST OF US INTENTIONS. TO NO ONE'S SURPRISE, BARNABY PREACHED HIS USUAL SERMON ABOUT THE SUPERPOWERS. ROZEMOND QUESTIONED AMERICAN WILLINGNESS TO EVER USE TNW'S FOR FEAR OF PUTTING AMERICAN CITIES IN JEOPARDY OF DESTRUCTION BY RUSSIAN STRATEGIC WEAPONS. A COUPLE OF NEWS COMMENTATORS DESCRIBED THE ER/RB WEAPON AS A US THREAT AIMED TO EXTRACT A LARGER CONVENTIONAL DEFENSE CONTRIBUTION FROM ITS EUROPEAN ALLIES.

7. COMMENT: DESPITE THE FACT THAT THE HEARING WAS WELL ATTENDED AND SERVED TO DISPLAY MUCH OF THE THINKING ABOUT THE ER/RB WEAPON WHICH HAS BEEN TAKING PLACE IN THIS COUNTRY SINCE AUGUST, IT IS NOT LIKELY TO LEAD TO GREATER CLARITY ABOUT THE ER/RB ISSUE IN THE MINDS OF EXPERTS OR OF THE PUBLIC. MANY OF THE QUESTIONS REMAIN JUDGMENTAL. MUCH OF THE THINKING WILL BE CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 THE HA 05736 02 OF 02 120623Z

REMAIN FUZZY. THE VIEWS OF MANY PEOPLE WILL CONTINUE TO BE GOVERNED BY EMOTION.

8. THE HEARING DID MAKE CLEAR, HOWEVER, THAT NO RESPONSIBLE PERSON IS WILLING TO GIVE AN UNQUALIFIED ENDORSEMENT TO THE ER/RB WEAPON. WHAT IS MORE, THE OVERALL EFFECT OF THE HEARING HAS BEEN TO FEED WIDESPREAD DOUBTS ABOUT THE ADVISABILITY OF GOING AHEAD. EMOTIONS ABOUT THE ER/RB QUESTION WILL CONTINUE TO BE STRONG IN A COUNTRY DEEPLY AMBIVALENT ABOUT NUCLEAR ISSUES (THE HAGUE 4048 NOTAL). POLITICIANS WILL CONTINUE TO SEE THE WEAPON AS POLITICAL DYNAMITE AS THEY CONTEMPLATE PROVINCIAL, EUROPEAN AND, JUST POSSIBLY, NEW NATIONAL ELECTIONS EARLY NEXT YEAR. UNDER THE CIRCUMSTANCES, AND WITH A NEW GOVERNMENT NOT YET IN SIGHT, THE NETHERLANDS WILL REMAIN PROFOUNDLY SKEPTICAL, IF NOT OPPOSED, TO THE INTRODUCTION INTO EUROPE OF THE ER/RB WEAPON.

MCCLOSKEY

CONFIDENTIAL

NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: RADAR, MDW
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 11-Nov-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977THEHA05736
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D770418-0768
Format: TEL
From: THE HAGUE
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t19771167/aaaacfic.tel
Line Count: 223
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 59a2801b-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 5
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 77 THE HAGUE 5508
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 07-Oct-2004 12:00:00 am
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 616533
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: ENHANCED RADIATION/REDUCED BLAST WEAPON (ER/RB): DUTCH UNEASE DEEPENS
TAGS: MNUC, NL, NATO, NPG
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odb://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/59a2801b-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009